



United States Department of Agriculture

FARMLAND PROTECTION POLICY ACT ANNUAL REPORT FOR FY-2015

United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

December 2016

Table of Contents

I. Progress of Federal Agencies in Implementing Farmland Protection Policy Act.....	1
Table 1.—Important Farmland Evaluated under FPPA 2006–2015	2
Table 2.—Top 10 States with Acres of Important Farmland Proposed for Conversion by Federal Projects	2
Table 3.—Acres of Farmland Proposed by State for Conversion Due to Federal Projects.....	3
Table 4.—Breakdown of Acres and AD-1006 Forms Received by Federal Agencies in FY-2015	4
II. Review and Revision of Federal Policies and Procedures Affecting Farmland Conversion	5

The fiscal year (FY) 2015 Farmland Protection Policy Act Annual Report consists of two components:

- I. Progress of Federal agencies in implementing Farmland Protection Policy Act; and
- II. Review and revision of Federal policies and procedures affecting farmland conversion.

I. Progress of Federal Agencies in Implementing Farmland Protection Policy Act

Under the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), Federal agencies are required to evaluate the impacts of federally funded projects that may involve permanently converting prime and important farmlands to nonagricultural uses and to consider alternative actions that would lessen the adverse effects of the land's conversion. In complying with the FPPA, Federal agencies request assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) by submitting a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form (Form AD-1006). The requesting agency then conducts a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) of the project area. NRCS provides the land evaluation information necessary for the responsible Federal agency to complete the site assessment portion of the analysis. To implement FPPA, Federal agencies address the potential conversion of agricultural land when reviewing internal projects or providing assistance to local communities.

Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is available for these uses (the land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forestland, or other land, but not urban built-up land or water). Land used for a specific high-value food or fiber crop is classified as "unique farmland." Generally, additional "farmlands of statewide importance" include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. In some local areas, there is concern for certain additional farmlands, even though these lands are not identified as having national or statewide importance. These farmlands are identified as being of "local importance" through ordinances adopted by local government. The NRCS State Conservationist reviews and certifies lists of farmland of State and local importance. These lists, along with State and locally established LESA systems where applicable, are used by Federal agencies to review and evaluate activities that may impact farmland.

As defined in 7 CFR part 657, important farmland encompasses prime and unique farmland, as well as farmland of statewide and local importance. Table 1 summarizes the proportion and amount of important farmland considered for conversion as a part of Federal projects under FPPA in fiscal years 2006 through 2015.

Table 1.—Important Farmland Evaluated under FPPA 2006–2015

Fiscal Year	Important Farmland (within land evaluated)	Percent Important Farmland (of total land evaluated)	Agencies Submitting Requests
	<i>Acres</i>	<i>% Total Acres</i>	<i>No. of Agencies</i>
2006	65,989	62%	26
2007	74,220	39%	25
2008	87,902	71%	25
2009	58,106	67%	23
2010	54,103	38%	30
2011	99,386	49%	29
2012	36,146	33%	33
2013	245,972	60%	33
2014	106,136	67%	32
2015	44,886	48%	34

In fiscal year 2015, NRCS received 2,315 requests from 34 Federal agencies to evaluate the impact of proposed land conversions that would result from their projects. A total of 92,729 acres of land from 43 States were proposed for conversion to nonagricultural uses. Of the acres reviewed, 48% (44,886 acres) were identified as important farmland (as defined in 7 CFR part 657). Of these important farmlands, 38,732 acres were prime farmland or unique farmland and 6,155 acres were State or locally important farmland.

Florida and California had the highest number of important farmland acres proposed for conversion, with 15,580 acres and 5,791 acres, respectively. Ten States reported no acres, and 11 States reported less than 100 acres (Tables 2 and 3).

In FY-2015, the agency that proposed the largest amount of important farmland for conversion (14,911 acres) was NRCS. This acreage accounts for more than 33 percent of all proposed important farmland conversion (Table 4).

Table 2.—Top 10 States with Acres of Important Farmland Proposed for Conversion by Federal Projects

State	Acres
Florida	15,580
California	5,791
Mississippi	2,521
Tennessee	2,349
Iowa	1,959
Georgia	1,895
Texas	1,818
Utah	1,704
Oklahoma	1,117
Alabama	997

Table 3.—Acres of Farmland Proposed by State for Conversion Due to Federal Projects

State	Total acres proposed by State	Total acres proposed by State as a percentage of total acres proposed nationwide	Acres of important farmland proposed by State	Acres of important farmland proposed by State as a percentage of acres of important farmland proposed nationwide	State	Total acres proposed by State	Total acres proposed by State as a percentage of total acres proposed nationwide	Acres of important farmland proposed by State	Acres of important farmland proposed by State as a percentage of acres of important farmland proposed nationwide
AK	22	0.02%	21	0.05%	NC	465	0.50%	433	0.96%
AL	3,062	3.30%	997	2.22%	ND	362	0.39%	213	0.47%
AR	1,337	1.44%	369	0.82%	NE	1,915	2.07%	142	0.32%
AZ	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	NH	21	0.02%	18	0.04%
CA	9,336	10.07%	5,791	12.90%	NJ	60	0.06%	40	0.09%
CO	14	0.01%	0	0.00%	NM	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
CT	25	0.03%	4	0.01%	NV	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
DE	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	NY	445	0.48%	376	0.84%
FL	35,377	38.15%	15,580	34.71%	OH	867	0.93%	274	0.61%
GA	3,121	3.37%	1,895	4.22%	OK	2,278	2.46%	1,117	2.49%
HI	311	0.34%	0	0.00%	OR	987	1.06%	916	2.04%
IA	2,675	2.88%	1,959	4.36%	PA	18	0.02%	18	0.04%
ID	344	0.37%	83	0.18%	PR	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
IL	626	0.68%	488	1.09%	RI	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
IN	1,431	1.54%	826	1.84%	SC	427	0.46%	232	0.52%
KS	558	0.60%	459	1.02%	SD	759	0.82%	573	1.28%
KY	1,594	1.72%	392	0.87%	TN	4,936	5.32%	2,349	5.23%
LA	1,461	1.58%	744	1.66%	TX	2,482	2.68%	1,818	4.05%
MA	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	UT	2,549	2.75%	1,704	3.80%
MD	101	0.11%	101	0.23%	VA	6,442	6.95%	537	1.20%
ME	1	0.00%	1	0.00%	VT	702	0.76%	42	0.09%
MI	157	0.17%	157	0.35%	WA	122	0.13%	42	0.09%
MN	976	1.05%	587	1.31%	WI	485	0.52%	610	1.36%
MO	889	0.96%	419	0.93%	WV	115	0.12%	22	0.05%
MS	2,824	3.05%	2,521	5.62%	WY	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
MT	52	0.06%	19	0.04%	Totals	92,729	100.0%	44,886	100.00%

Table 4.—Breakdown of Acres and AD-1006 Forms Received by Federal Agencies in FY-2015

<i>Federal Agency</i>	<i>No. of AD-1006 requests to NRCS</i>	<i>No. of acres proposed for conversion</i>	<i>No. of acres identified as important farmland</i>	<i>Of which:</i>	
				<i>Prime or unique</i>	<i>State or locally important</i>
Bureau of Prisons	1	15	13	13	0
Department of Agriculture					
• Natural Resources Conservation Service	14	34,540	14,911	14,897	14
• Rural Development	457	10,741	4,071	2,773	1,297
• Rural Utilities Service	169	1,715	772	483	289
• Others (unspecified agencies)	2	1	0	0	0
Department of Commerce					
• Economic Development Administration	8	458	255	92	164
• NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service	1	0	0	0	0
• Others (unspecified agencies)	1	0	0	0	0
Department of Defense					
• Department of Army	2	5	5	0	5
• Department of Navy	1	89	89	89	0
• National Guard Bureau	1	0	0	0	0
• U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	23	7,274	6,237	5,619	618
• Others (unspecified agencies)	2	257	257	100	157
Department of Energy	6	1,772	1,465	1,465	0
Department of Health and Human Services					
• Health Resources and Services Administration	2	394	253	0	253
• Indian Health Service	4	0	0	0	0
• Others (unspecified agencies)	8	0	0	0	0
Department of Homeland Security					
• Federal Emergency Management Agency	69	895	723	123	600
Department of Housing and Urban Development	474	1,539	1,176	1,051	125
Department of Interior					
• Bureau of Indian Affairs	71	503	276	150	125
• National Park Service	1	97	0	0	0
• Office of Surface Mining	3	0	0	0	0
Department of Transportation					
• Federal Aviation Administration	24	1,592	881	698	184
• Federal Highway Administration	472	20,804	8,524	7,011	1,513
• Federal Railroad Administration	3	4	4	4	0
• Others (unspecified agencies)	380	7,147	2,884	2,254	631
Department of the Treasury	4	34	30	25	5
Department of Veterans Affairs	3	30	26	19	6
Environmental Protection Agency	94	935	421	252	169
Federal Bureau of Investigation	1	0	0	0	0
Federal Communications Commission	1	2	2	2	0
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	6	25	15	15	0
Small Business Administration	1	0	0	0	0
Tennessee Valley Authority	6	1,862	1,597	1,597	0
TOTAL	2,315	92,729	44,886	38,732	6,155

II. Review and Revision of Federal Policies and Procedures Affecting Farmland Conversion

Based on ongoing reviews, there were no revisions of Federal policies and procedures affecting farmland conversion. To simplify completion of required forms for projects that impact important farmland, NRCS continues to regularly update PDF (portable document format) versions of two important forms: Farmland Conversion Impact Rating (Form AD-1006) and Farmland Conversion Impact Rating for Corridor Type Project (Form NRCS-CPA-106). These fillable forms can be downloaded from the FPPA section of the NRCS website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/landuse/fppa/>.